

RICHARD WILSON

Nixon Policy Style Depends on Tight Security

President Nixon has taken pride in not being overly sensitive to news leaks or controversy inside his administration. He has spoken privately of this numerous times, drawing a contrast between his own attitude and that in previous administrations not excluding the Eisenhower administration.

His tolerance in this respect is undergoing a severe test because it has been demonstrated that somehow, some way, the most carefully guarded substance of secretly held high level conferences in the White House on extremely sensitive matters has fallen into the hands of columnist Jack Anderson.

Far more than the Pentagon papers, publication of these summaries of White House conferences on the India-Pakistan war compromises the government's security system. The Pentagon papers dealt with history in the previous administration without a direct relationship to current events. How and why they became available for publication is known.

The new White House papers are hot off the press, so to speak, relate directly to current events, involve officials

now holding office, and throw into startling relief the motivations of the President in favoring Pakistan. It was known that he favored Pakistan but the disclosed summaries reveal the mockery of later pretenses about neutrality.

There may be no lasting or particularly unfavorable results from this particular disclosure. It was no secret to India, Ghandi, nor the Russians, where Nixon stood. Secretary of State William P. Rogers publicly placed the blame on India. The tilt toward Pakistan ordered at the President's urgent behest by security adviser Henry Kissinger was clear on the face of events and the President's ever ready senatorial critics had already seized upon it.

To have the "tilt" so badly disclosed in the stilted language of government officials summarizing the meetings at the White House added the stark emphasis which official briefings and statements had avoided.

An understanding of how Nixon operates is helpful in comprehending why the public disclosure of these secret papers is such a serious matter. Nixon operates indirectly in foreign affairs, not to say de-

viously. He presses levers, sends signals, makes moves intended to bring pressure and influence events without the overt or irreversible actions which might involve the United States either in war or permanent conflict. Movements of the 6th Fleet in the Middle East crisis are an example. Another example is provided by the present fleet movements in the Indian Ocean.

He relies, too, on bold, unexpected strokes: The import surcharge for its shock value and never intended to be continued long, dollar devaluation, and more recently the pressure he was bringing on India. Equally as complex are his moves on the prisoner of war problem in Vietnam and his coming conferences in Moscow and Peking.

The hidden hand is just as vital to this way of operating as to a poker player.

Now that the summaries on the India-Pakistan maneuvers have been disclosed publicly, President Nixon cannot go to bed at night without considering the possibility that someone who attended a White House conference that day will prove to be a conduit for public disclosure of his stratagems.

It is too much to expect, and Nixon's previous attitude on such disclosures indicates that he does not expect, that newsmen will reject information merely because it has been labeled secret. In most instances they will find one way or another to get it into print and when one of their number, like Anderson, has excelled them in finding the unfindable they will both envy and support him. Many of them will do so even though they disagree with the motives of those who supplied the information or doubt the objectivity of those who relayed it to the public.

Such is the atmosphere in which Nixon operates and he is fully aware of it. His previous attitudes have indicated he knows there is nothing he can really do about it outside the confines of the executive establishment itself. This is undoubtedly why he is playing in very low key any actions against the press or threats to the press and is concentrating on finding and punishing those inside the government who try to compromise his policy by transmitting secret information to the press.

In Russia or China such miscreants, or even suspects, would promptly be shot. And, of course, the secret papers would not be published, either, and the chances are that an editor or reporter receiving them would denounce and expose his informant.

This means nothing at all in the present atmosphere in Washington. Nor, in all likelihood, will burgeoning congressional investigations mean anything. Nixon will have to rely upon the trustworthiness of those who know the cards he holds in his hand, and that means tightening up White House security until it hurts.